# Report on the eBPLS Readiness Survey

## Investment Enabling Environment (INVEST) Project

# I.  INTRODUCTION

The Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Interior and Local Government launched the **Nationwide Streamlining of Business Permits and Licensing System (BPLS) Program** on August 2010 in response to the need to improve the efficiency in the processing of business permits in the country. The program included the setting of service standards for BPLS thru a Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, Series of 2010 signed by DTI and DILG with the support of the Local Government Unit (LGU) Leagues and the private sector. Training programs were implemented by both agencies, which resulted in more than 600 LGUs either adopting, or in the process of, implementing the standards.

Despite these initiatives, the Philippines' ranking in global surveys has not substantially improved. Hence, the government is now encouraging all cities and municipalities to adopt automation, the second component of the BPLS Streamlining Program of the government, to accelerate the efficiency of business processing. The automation of BPLS is a project to be spearheaded by the Department of Science and Technology, through its ICT Office, in cooperation with DTI and DILG.

The BPLS Automation Project will be officially launched on July 24, 2012, with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) as cooperating agencies. DOST currently heads the Technical Working Group (TWG) that has been supporting the BPLS automation project. The objective of the project is to promote the use of automation by LGUs in processing business permits. Part of the project is to assess the readiness of the LGUs to computerize thru the conduct of an e-Readiness Survey similar to the survey conducted by the then National Computer Center in 2002 and 2006. The results of the survey will then be used by government to determine the capacity building programs that will be provided to target LGUs.

The Investment Enabling Environment (INVEST) Project supported the preparation of the E- Readiness Survey Questionnaire. This report briefly explains the survey questionnaire which is an output under Deliverable 2.1 under Program Area 1.2 of Component 1 of the INVEST Project.

## II. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR BPLS COMPUTERIZATION

The BPLS Program of the government has 5 components: (1) advocacy (or identifying champions); (2) process re-engineering; (3) computerization; (4) customer relations; and (5) institutionalization. The draft framework for the BPLS automation which was formulated by the TWG headed by DOST is shown below. This framework has 5 components: (1) social marketing; (2) e-Readiness; (3) capacity building; (4) system development; (5) roll-out; and (6) deployment. The details of the framework will be formulated when the Technical Working Group is formally created through the Memorandum of Agreement which is going to be signed by DOST, DILG and DTI. Note that the framework includes the determination of the LGU's e-readiness thru a survey.



Nationwide Streamlining of the BPLS in the Philippines
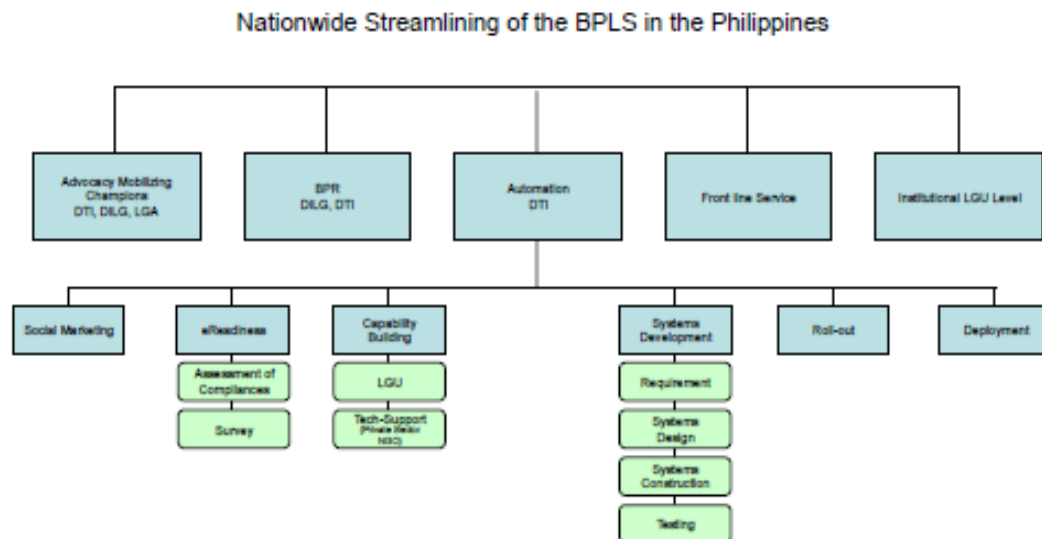
## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

The survey intends to assess an LGU's readiness in automating their BPLS and provide recommendations for automation: (1) assessing the institutional capacity of the LGU; (2) evaluating the sufficiency of the Information Technology (IT) staff complement for BPLS Automation; and, (3) exploring automation options an LGU can employ based on the results of the survey. The Survey built on the two surveys prepared by the NCC and took into account the requirements of the Philippine Business Registry (PBR), which the DTI is currently operating, as well as the eReadiness Survey of the eGov4MD project of the Canadian International Aid Agency which is promoting the eBPLS plus software.

## IV.  DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

The survey questionnaire is found in Annex 1. The contents and target respondents are described below:

### A.  Contents  of the Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided in four parts:

1. *LGU BPLS Profile.* This section covers information regarding the number of businesses operating within the LGU, the income profile of the LGU, Profile of the Local Chief Executive, and a background of the BPLS process of the LGU – specifying steps, forms, signatories and pre-requisite documents.

   a.  STEP/s – face-to-face interactions between applicants and a public official or a private provider that are required in applying for business permits and licenses

   b.  Signatories – persons who sign or initial any document given to the applicant
   c.  Forms – any piece of paper (whether physical or virtual) that the applicant fills out to go through the steps

   d.  Required Document/s – any piece of paper that needs to be attached to any form prior to approval or clearing

2. *Human Resource Capacity.* This section would solicit information regarding   the (wetware) or personnel capacity available within the LGU, specifically:

   a.  # of employees that needs to be connected to the internet
   b.  Availability of IT Office/ Personnel
   c.  Training programs provided to IT personnel
   d.  # of employees in the BPLO/BPLD

3. *ICT Facilities.* This part of the questionnaire would cover details regarding:

   a.  Existing arrangements with PBR
   b.  Existence of an ISSP
   c.  Availability of ICT equipment and facilities required in automating BPLS
   e.  Network service providers in the locality

4. *Respondents' Contact Information.*

### B. Target Respondents

Initial respondents would come from the list of LGUs that have reportedly done reforms in their BPLS Process, which is estimated to be about 600 LGUs.

Target respondent of the survey must have a basic knowledge regarding computer specifications, extensive information regarding the business process/profile and human resource capacity of the LGU, and must view the process using the applicants; perspective.

## V.  STATUS OF THE SURVEY

The survey questionnaire has been commented on by the members of the TWG and is ready to be rolled out. The DOST's ICT Office is converting the questionnaire into an online version.

The INVEST project has contracted a statistician that is currently reviewing the questionnaire and will be designing the survey. Once this is done, the TWG will agree on the conduct of the questionnaire.